

TOTALLY INDYPENDENT

Newsletter of Haringey Solidarity Group

www.haringey.org.uk

"During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act" - George Orwell

WHY DON'T WE GIVE UP ON POLITICIANS?

Watching the news, it must be obvious to everyone that politicians are all a total waste of time. What Brexit has shown, is none of them have a clue what they are doing and can't organise a piss up in a brewery.

At Haringey Solidarity Group we have been saying for years that politicians are useless and have no clue. The problem is most hide it well and the main stream press cover it up. But finally, with Brexit, the house of cards comes tumbling down.

Politicians time and again make rubbish decisions that benefit their mates and rob ordinary people like us. Take Haringey, the old labour leadership were happy to evict hundreds of residents

from Northumberland Park and Love Lane so posh houses, which most of us can't afford, could be built. But the new labour lot (who were supposed to support us) are now in and they are determined to evict the Latin American market at Wards Corner (so no change there). National politicians are just as bad - we can all think of examples of them supporting the rich against ordinary people.

Many people can't be bothered to vote. Many more feel they have to as it's their "duty" but know change is unlikely. Even committed Labour, Green, Lib Dem and Tory faithful, deep down, know their leaders won't change things for those of us without huge bank balances.

So we give up in despair and just take the shit that is dished out. But there is a different way. One where we get to really make a change. And that's people getting together and making things change. Demanding what they want. Fighting for what we all need.

We see examples of this every day. It could be people organising a sports team, or a play group. On a slightly larger scale it could be a Friends of the Park group or a Residents Association. Or people setting up a community group or taking back a community centre. Or people coming together after someone has been killed by the police or the state.

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These are all great examples of people who feel they have little power coming together to take on the state and the politicians (locally or nationally). But we could go so much further if we really thought about it and had the courage to do it.

We could form street level groups with all our neighbours and take control of our streets. We could make sure homes were owned by local people rather than property developers and dodgy landlords. We could work together to make sure none of our neighbours were cruelly evicted or we could collectively force landlords to do repairs.

In workplaces we could insist bosses gave workers proper wages or we boycott them. Going even further, the workers could demand they have an equal say

as the boss in everything to do with running the business – be it a corner shop or a multinational.

We could have schools where parents and teachers ran them rather than the state or rich businesses that run academies and free schools. And why stop at the parents and teachers? Why not give children and young adults responsibilities and control to decide what happens at school as well? I know when I was a kid, if school was more interesting and I was treated with respect and had some control over the place I was shut up in 6 hours a day, I wouldn't have truanted as much. I still might have had the odd day off though, like I take a "sickie" when I don't want to go to work. Working or school five days a week is mad – we could change that as well, to have more free time.

The possibilities are endless.

All that is stopping us is our imagination and desire to change things.

So, next time you hear some boring politician going on about Brexit, or why ordinary people can't have good homes, health care or schooling for themselves or their kids, don't just give up. Start talking to your neighbours, workmates, friends, parents, people you hang out on the streets with, or wherever you mix with other people and start taking things into your own hands collectively. Once we start a number of smaller things we can then join together and form bigger groupings of us. At Haringey Solidarity Group we reckon, together, we could totally run the borough one day through a collection of different groups of ordinary people doing things together. And once we have done it in Haringey then...

MORE SOCIAL CLEANSING BUT PEOPLE ARE FIGHTING BACK

"Why can't we go downstairs and play with our friends?" says Anna from south London. Anna can't use a local community playground because she lives in social housing rather than privately-owned flats. The two communities are split apart by a wall put up by rich property developers Henley Homes, who built the flats.

But this isn't unusual. At least half a dozen other estates across London separate play areas

for richer and poorer kids. And it's not just scummy property developers like Henley Homes, London Square and Berkeley Homes. Housing Associations like Southern Housing, Moat Housing and Peabody are doing it as well – the so-called "social" housing providers.

As the gap between the rich and poor grows larger, kids being segregated because of the home they live in is disgusting. The playground row is yet

another vile tactic after separate entrances, or "poor doors", for tenants on lower rents, or facilities such as gyms only for those who can afford it.

In a "so called" market twisted towards "luxury", where attracting investors is a priority, and outdoor space is privatised, denying children access to play facilities that are part of the development they live in is cruel.

One tenant in Streatham Hill, south London, said: "I'm actually glad I don't look over the gardens: how would I tell my children that they can't play there because I don't have a fat bank balance?"

But resistance is growing. Mums from both sides of the "divide" joined together and forced Henley Homes to knock down the wall. After local pressure Peabody have also taken the divide away. Others are still fighting so all kids can use the play space on their estates. If parents don't get the walls and gates taken down, they may have to take out the hammers and bolt cutters and do it themselves.



WHO OWNS OUR HERITAGE?



Research shows that 1% of the population in England owns more than 50% of the land. If distributed to everybody living in the country, it would amount to about 1 acre (about the size of a football pitch) per person. Instead, it means we have little control on decisions regarding housing, the environment and public services as they all depend on who owns the land.

Look at the dispute between residents and Haringey Council over the future of the Wards Corner market in Seven Sisters. Disagreement between developers Grainger and residents over the site's future has been going on for more than 15 years: Grainger wants to demolish it and build luxury flats. Residents want to restore it, keep low rent accommodation and existing market facilities for the local community. They even got the support of UN Human Rights experts, but was this enough? No. Last January Haringey Council issued a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) granting Grainger

the right to build a shopping centre and **ZERO affordable homes**. Works are planned to start in August 2020. They offered to reinstate the traders once the works are finished. But can you picture rich people in the new homes going for an empanada or to an unsophisticated hairdresser? This is not their scene or cultural heritage.

Indeed, heritage is not only made of old churches and palaces, ancient pots and rare books. Our heritage is made of things reflecting our everyday lives, the celebrations, food, music, practices we teach our children and make us who we are. That's why the Wards Corner Market in Seven Sisters needs to stay and the residents are challenging the CPO at the High Court. They need £7,500 to pay for the legal battle. If you care please donate what you can at

crowdjustice.com/case/savelatinvillage-cpo-appeal

Let's gain back our rights to our land!

IT'S SIMPLE. BUILD MORE SOCIAL HOUSING.

There are nearly 3000 households with over 5000 children living in temporary accommodation (TA) in Haringey. TA tenants were invited by Homes for Haringey (HfH) to the Civic Centre in March to explore options in finding them permanent accommodation.

The options were, help in finding a place in the private rented sector, relocate out of London or help to buy your own home.

But, homes in the private rented sector are far too expensive. The conditions and suitability of many places leave a lot to be desired. Some landlords are a nightmare for tenants, with an unwillingness to fix problems in poorly kept properties. HfH will offer cash incentives (up to £4k) for landlords to house TA tenants for a two-year period. HfH will then take these tenants off the council waiting list, which helps to manipulate the homelessness figures. This makes HfH look like they are doing a good job. The tenants themselves could be facing rent rises after the two-year period expires leaving them in unaffordable accommodation, and back where they started from.

If people are happy relocating out of London that is fine. But to move away from the area they grew up in, away from family members, friends, support network, kids school and work is not a good option for many people.

Buy your own - really! Is this a serious option? If people are in a position to buy their own home would they choose to live in TA for at least ten years? With so many TA tenants experiencing overcrowding, poor maintained properties, including damp conditions and rodent problems buying their own place would be a no brainer.

Sorry for being cynical but, it sounded more like HfH are struggling to deal with the council's poor housing policy and want the TA tenants to sort the problem out for them by accepting some very poor, unrealistic options.

SCHOOLKIDS TEACH US A LESSON

Thousands of students in more than 100 UK towns and cities, have been walking out of school to protest about climate change.

Taking inspiration from the Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg they pledge to continue with the strikes until meaningful action is taken to prevent an environmental disaster that could threaten all life on the planet.

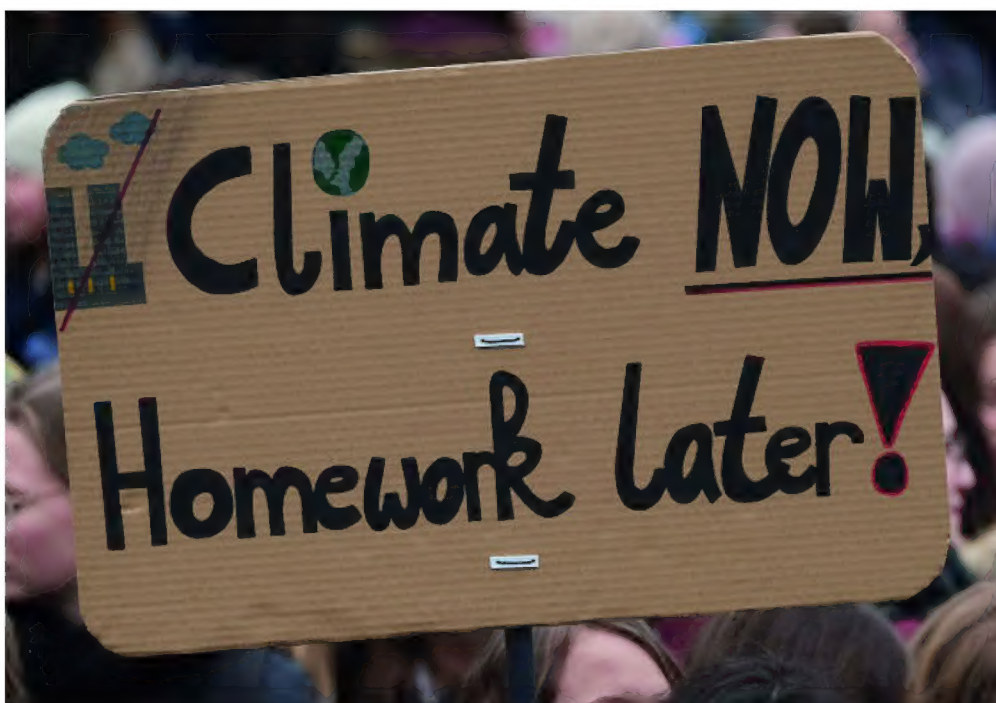
Criticism of kids missing lessons was countered by Greta who said "Why should I study for a future that may be soon no more. When no one is doing anything to save that future? And what is the point of learning facts when the most important facts clearly mean nothing to our society?"

Politicians said they have listened and will do everything they can to improve the situation. Why should they be believed?

Greta told UK MPs: "You don't listen to the science because you are only interested in the answers that will allow you to carry on as if nothing has happened. You only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess, even when the only sensible thing to do is pull the emergency brake. You are not mature enough to tell it like it is. Even that burden you leave to us children."

"Our civilisation is being sacrificed for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue making enormous amounts of money. It is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few. You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes."

Support for the strikes is vital. Parents, workers, unions, everyone who cares about our kids future should be backing them. A general strike has been called in September, lets not let them down again.



STOP DISCRIMINATING.

A recent report said women get paid less than men. In posh terms this is the "gender pay gap". The Equal Pay Act came into force nearly 50 years ago, but many employers still pay women less. So, you can have as many laws as you want. But if the state and bosses ignore them, they're useless.

So why are women treated worse than men? Some reasons are:

"Direct discrimination". Basically, a boss just decides they will pay men more than women for the same job. Totally illegal but bosses do it until workers fight to change it.

Women's knowledge and skills are undervalued, so women earn less than men for doing similar jobs. Women who worked as cooks, cleaners, catering and care staff for Birmingham Council won compensation because they were denied bonuses given to employees in traditionally male-dominated but similar-level jobs such as refuse collectors, street cleaners and grave-diggers.

Women's skills are undervalued in promotions - gender stereotypes mean that women may be seen as less competent or 'managerial'. Or their status as mothers means bosses question

their commitment to work (funny - being a father doesn't have the same effects). So women are less likely to be promoted than men.

Then there's the fact women and men still tend to work in different types of jobs. How many teachers in your primary school are men? This "occupational segregation" effects the gender pay gap as women often work in jobs where wages are, on average, lower than in jobs dominated by men.

If you are a black or ethnic minority female, you face race and sex discrimination. Research shows Asian women are discriminated against in employment more than any other group. Other groups are also doubly discriminated against.

This needs to change and all jobs need to be seen as equally important. Those of us that clean your street and loos are just as important as the fat cat bosses - probably more so.

For more information about women fighting back a good place to start is Women's Strike (<https://womenstrike.org.uk/>). But women are fighting back every day and need all our support - no matter what sex or gender we are.

KNIFE CRIME: A WEAPON FOR REPRESSION

In March, London labour MPs lobbied government for extra police to deal with knife crime. Theresa May held a knife crime emergency summit resulting in new knife crime behaviour orders the police and courts could use. Everyone wants something to be done but what really needs to be done and how do we get it?

We need a wide-ranging public discussion on youth violence which includes household poverty, inequality and drugs policy. But instead we have a grim agreement from Jeremy Corbyn to the Tory Home Secretary to use more weapons that will deepen further Britain's racial and class divides.

Author Stuart Hall explains in his book "Policing the Crisis" that the courts, police and media are not neutral to any alleged crisis but are active participants in constructing it. The book looks at the early 1970s "mugging crisis," but it could be any crisis and suggests:

- The media claim something is a threat to society.
- The threat is simplified and made symbolic through either a devil figure or an innocent victim.
- This fear is backed up by supposed facts, but police and politicians decide what statistics are gathered, how they are collected, and which are used.
- Authorities and courts then respond to the threat, i.e. increased prison sentences etc.
- Finally, the panic results in new laws and more resources for state enforcement.

How bad is knife crime?

For London, recent research stated only 21% of knife crime murders between 2008 to 2018 was related to "gangs". NHS data shows 2007 had the highest recorded number of sharp object related hospital admissions. 2007 also had the

recent high of stabbing related deaths (272) until 2018 (285). Bad though 285 deaths are, an increase of 13 doesn't suggest we are living in unprecedented time requiring a national emergency.

Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, agreed in 2018 to increase the use of Stop and Search despite promising before his election to do the exact opposite. The Mayor's office for policing and crime (MOPAC) released figures showing that in 2018 disproportionate use had increased. Black people were now four times as likely as white people to be searched. But black people were also less likely (16%) than white people (20%) to be arrested after a search.

Home Office research in 2016 concluded that mass use of stop and search doesn't reduce crime. The College of Policing did a study called "Does more stop and search mean less crime?" - the answer in terms of violent crime was no.

While government think there are no alternatives to reducing youth violence without attacking working-class communities, alternatives do exist but require building a social movement led by communities directly affected to win them.

Here are some ideas for such a movement:

1. Increase social security spending. End child hunger and guarantee decent housing for all. Children at risk of carrying out youth violence, are often vulnerable themselves,

living in financially insecure homes. This would have to go beyond reversing austerity, as austerity started in 2010, three years after the 2007 knife violence peak.

2. Follow Portugal and decriminalise illegal drugs. Portugal has shown that the best way to abolish illegal drug markets is to decriminalise them as illegal flows requires violent controls and organisations.

3. Provide enough support services for all survivors of domestic violence. Many who use violence have themselves been traumatised by witnessing street violence, domestic violence and/or trapped in a home where this is prevalent. So refuge shelter provision for domestic violence survivors, including ones for specific racialised groups, is crucial.

4. Massively increase counselling and mental health provision for young people. But not only in schools but also linked to more youth workers and youth service provision.

5. The decline in youth services and spaces are also a contributing factor. So any strategy to make young people safer should involve training local people with relevant experiences and connections to reverse a decade or more of cuts and poverty.

It takes mass movements, not well meaning politicians, to move the State away from using greater violence to increased genuine protection of all.



WHEN THE SPURS GO MARCHING ON



We found the article below on the internet recently and feel it's worth reprinting, from the Football Lads and Lasses Against Fascism.

Growing up on the terraces at White Hart Lane as a kid I never felt uneasy. There was this amazing sense of togetherness that you could feel coming from every home stand. So imagine my disgust, shock and anger, when I heard that a so-called Spurs fan threw a banana skin onto the pitch towards a Black player from the opposing team! Historically our club faced bigotry due to our link to the Jewish community to the point opposing fans would use derogatory remarks aimed at the fans and the team. They'd refer to us as "Yids" but the fans didn't buckle and instead went and owned the term by calling themselves "Yids" and still to this day chant it.

You wouldn't see any form of bigotry on our terraces because the fans would have dealt with it before the police even got a look in.

Unfortunately, in the last few months, certain people, and the actions of groups like the Democratic Football Lad Alliance (DFLA), and to a lesser degree the English Defense League (EDL) has given the confidence to the closet bigots who now think it's 'free speech' and ok to air their racist views in public!

It's the divisive actions of these groups that have allowed this banana skin incident to happen. They're trying to use ours and other clubs to attack one community in our country, yet stay silent about other similar things that happen in all communities. But they go even further and stay silent when incidents that are clearly racist happen. Yet, they get vocal and make threats against any fans that stand up and talk about anti-fascism and anti-racism!

Take your vile hatred out of our club and let real fans who want inclusion enjoy the proud history of Spurs.

For more information about the group check out: flaf.org.uk

NO PASARAN

We have just had another round of European elections. And again we saw and heard increasingly vocal nationalists and extreme-right wing parties and groups presenting their ideas. Why?

In part, the rise of the far right coincides with 'fears' aroused across Europe by a 'tidal wave' of desperate migrants. Around 550,000 refugees arrived in Italy and Greece in 2015. By some estimates, Germany had received 1.5 million migrants.

The far right use all their disgusting language

against multiculturalism and integration. They use the migration crisis as an excuse to capitalize on the rising fear of some voters who might otherwise never consider supporting them. One example is in France. The Front National's Marine Le Pen (the self-dubbed "Madame Frexit") gained 31 percent at the last presidential election, jeopardizing the entire E.U. project from the top-down. The Front National has been around since 1972, but it has never played a more important role in French politics. Le Pen has shown how wide-ranging the rise of the far right has become in Europe.

At the same time, here in United Kingdom we have the likes of Nigel Farage and Tommy Robinson who have repeatedly shown a desire for anti-Muslim street politics. As suggested by the organisation 'Hope not Hate' the far-right could exploit Brexit and Islamophobia, stating: "Divisions within Britain are likely to increase and this will further split communities and boost the far-right's populist anti-politics message".

Therefore, the far right will go on the attack fueling their anti-Muslim and anti-migrant racist propaganda. We must stand together and not let them divide us! **NO PASARAN.**

DIVIDED WE FALL

SOLIDARITY IS STRENGTH

Being a white British national brings certain privileges that you might not be aware of. Privileges that Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people don't enjoy.

You are more likely to have a better education with the opportunity to go onto university. More likely to get a job with better pay and promotion open to you. Have access to better quality housing. Less likely to live in poverty. Not so likely to be hassled on the street by the cops because of the colour of your skin.

There is no doubt that the institutions that affect our lives are racist, regardless of any efforts to address the inequalities in the system. Living in this country as BAME is to be living at a serious disadvantage to white British nationals. As well as the institutions some ordinary British people are also racist to BAME communities.

Here is the experience of one foreign national living and working in London.

"Living here seven years with my husband, we thought that things were alright and we could make a good life for ourselves here.

"Sometimes people would be rude but nothing too bad, I just thought they were stupid people. When the referendum vote for Brexit happened things changed.

"One time on the bus I was talking to my mother on the phone. A young woman started to shout at me. The bus was full with people but no-one said anything to help me. She just kept on shouting at me "speak English in my country, get off the bus." I got off the bus to get away from her. I felt scared, embarrassed and humiliated. What is wrong with these people? I didn't do anything wrong, I was talking to my mother. She doesn't speak English, I do.

"I am careful now when I am out on my own. I worry that something might happen again, it is not a nice feeling. We can make money here and have a good life but if we are not going to be happy because people don't like us because we are not British we will go home. Things are not so good there but we can find work and would have our family and friends around us.

"Since the referendum result



my husband goes on the internet every day after work looking at social media trying to find the mood of the people in the country. There is a lot of racist stuff on there.

"We were planning to stay but are not sure now, if things get worse we will go back to our country."

If ordinary people like us are ever to get a better distribution of the wealth in the world we need to stick together, whatever our creed, colour or nationality, and wherever we decide to call home. Those that divide us, like in the story above, only protect the rich staying rich and the rest of us living in poverty. You protect our class enemies. We are in this together – let's celebrate our diversity, not attack each other.

Yellow Vests Banned



Military Deployed

THIS IS DEMOCRACY

In March, French President Emmanuel Macron sent soldiers onto the streets of France to stop the Gilets Jaunes (Yellow Vests). This could be a dangerous move for the French state.

While journalists and French politicians worry about protestors being shot there is a much more exciting or worrying possibility depending on your views.

Troops in Sudan and Algeria recently ignored their presidents and sided with protestors. In 2018 Armenian soldiers joined protestors. In many of the European revolutions in the 80s and 90s troops refused to shoot protestors.

It doesn't happen often but there are many examples of troops supporting the people against their leaders.

Soldiers on the streets are a risk for any politician. Unlike

the police who almost always side with the state and are happy doing its dirty work against their brothers and sisters. The last figures we found of police attacks on the yellow vest protestors are: 8,000+ arrested, 500 major injuries, 2,000+ imprisoned,

1,500+ awaiting trials (as of mid Feb), 12 deaths, 20+ blindings, 6 hands lost, 10,000+ rubber bullets fired.

Has Macron unleashed his own downfall by putting soldiers on the streets of France? We hope so. All power to the Yellow Vests.

WHO WE ARE

In 1991, Haringey Solidarity Group (HSG) emerged from the Anti-Poll Tax campaign. We wanted to create a long-term, vibrant, non-hierarchical group, unlike political parties where ambitions and posturing displace real politics.

We believe in ridding ourselves of the current system which places profit and power before people's needs. This involves getting organised, fighting back and collectively taking those decisions which affect our daily lives.

We think people should take control of their community and workplace struggles, support each other, encourage practical solidarity, build the necessary skills and knowledge for these struggles and generate strong, permanent, grassroots networks.

Many of us are involved with local residents', community and campaign groups within the borough. We support workers in dispute, campaigns against public service cuts and threatened community amenities. We are active on environmental, housing and claimants' issues and resist state controls.

Come and share your views at our monthly meeting. We welcome your involvement and with practical activities including distributing this newsletter and producing other materials including posters and leaflets.

For more about HSG, visit www.haringey.org.uk, befriend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter @_hsg_, contact us at PO Box 2474, London N8, phone 0845 2235270 or email info@haringey.org.uk